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Message Text

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63
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

EUR-12 SAJ-01 EA-07 SCCT-01 /080 W
---------- 105169
R 160955Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 356
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1961

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, BG
SUBJ: JSD DEMONSTRATION: MARCH HALTED, BUT PETITION DELIVERED

REF: DACCA 1906

1. THE JATIYO SAMAJTANTRIK DAL (JSD) HAD LITTLE SUCCESS YESTERDAY (APRIL 15) WHEN IT ATTEMPTED AGAIN, IN A NEAR-REPEAT OF MARCH 31, TO BRING A PROCESSION OUT OF THE DACCA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THERE WERE TWO TRIES - ONE IN MID-AFTERNOON AND ANOTHER IN THE EVENING. AN EMBASSY OFFICER PASSING BY OBSERVED THE FIRST ATTEMPT, WHICH INVOLVED SIGNIFICANTLY FEWER STUDENTS THAN ON MARCH 31. THE POLICE, ARMED WITH LATHIS BUT NO RPT NO TEAR GAS, WERE STANDING STEADFASTLY AT THE UNIVSERSITY GATE THROUGH WHICH THE MARCHERS SOUGHT TO PASS AND THE STUDENTS WERE DAUNTED. THE SECOND TRY WAS APPARENTLY MORE BOISTEROUS. A SENIOR JOURNALIST TOLD OUR BANGLADESHI POLITICAL ASSISTANT THAT WHEN THE JSD MARCHERS MOVED THROUGH THE GATE, A MILD LATHI CHARGE WAS NDADED TO DISPERSE THE WOULD-BE MARCHERS, A FEW OF WHOM WERE ARRESTED.

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2. EVEN THOUGH THE MARCH WAS UNSUCCESSFUL -- EXCEPT,

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OF COURSE, FOR THE VERY IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF KEEPING THE JSD IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND -- THE JSD DID MANAGE TO DELIVER A PETITION OT US; WHETHER THEY DELIVERED THEM TO OTHER EMBASSIES REMAINS TO BE CONFIRMED. THE POLICE GUARD AT CHANCERY AND THE RESIDENCE HAD BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY AUGMENTED IN ANTICIPATION THAT MARCHERS MIGHT INDEED REACH OUR PREMISES. BUT THE JSD, ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE PETITION DELIVERED (AND, DOUBTLESS, TO BE ABLE TO SAY IT HAD DELIVERED THE PETITION), SIMPLY SENT ONE MAN WHO WAS ABLE TO WALK QUIETLY TO OUR FOURTH FLOOR RECEPTION AREA. THERE, HAVING ANNOUNCED THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT, HE TURNED THE PETITION OVER TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER. THE PETITION ITSELF DEALT LARGELY WITH THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY FARAKKA, INDIAN INTENTIONS, THE DANGERS OF AMNESTYING BAKSALITES, AND BIG POWER ("PARTICULARLY INDIA, U.S.S.R. AND U.S.A.") MACHINATIONS, AND REFLECTED THE TONE OF THE FLYER WHICH HAS ANNOUNCED THE APRIL 15 EFFORTS. (COPIES OF THE PETITION ARE BEING POUCHED TO ADDRESSES.)

3. COMMENT: YESTERDAY'S EVENTS WERE MIXED BAG FOR THE JSD. IT NEVER REACHED THE ROADS BUT IT DELIVERED ITS PETITION (AT LEAST TO US) AS IT SAID IT WOULD AND IT IS THE ONE POLITICAL GROUP WHICH IS CONTANTLY MENTIONED -- SOMETIMES WITH APPREHENSION, SOMETIME WITH GRUDGING ADMIRATION, BUT ALMOST ALWAYS FOR NERVE. JSD'S STAYING POWER IS OPEN TO SERIOUS QUESTION, AS IS ITS GRASP ON REALITY; A REVIEW OF ITS RECORD OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS WILL QUICKLY BLUNT ANY IMPLUSE TO CALL IT "THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE." BUT A PROFESSOR AT DACCA UNIVERSITY WHO IS SERIOUS SCHOLAR OF THE BANGLADESH LEFT (WITH WHICH HE MAINTAINS RATHER SUBSTANTIAL CONTACTS) TELLS US THAT HE GIVES IT HGIH MARKS FOR DEDICATION AND ORGANIZATION. HOREOVER, HE STATES CONFIDENTLY THAT THE PARTY'S CHIEF FIGURE, SERAJUL ALAM KHAN, IS BACK IN DACCA AGAIN, WORKING TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTY AND TO PREPARE IT FOR A MORE ACTIVE FUTURE, A FACT WHICH HE FINDS PORTENTOUS. IT WOULD SEEM WE ARE TO HEAR MORE OF THE JSD.
BOSTER

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